

DETERMINANTS FOR POSITIONING AND PROMOTING TVET IN TANZANIA: INFORMATION FOR DEVELOPING A MARKETING STRATEGY

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ABSTRACT

This paper highlights important determinants for positioning and promoting Technical and Vocational Education Training (TVET) programs in Tanzania. The paper provides information that could provide operational insight to support the development of a marketing strategy and tools to promote TVET programs. While conducting this study, we reviewed literature to gain a better understanding of the situation of TVET in Tanzania. The literature review is complemented by data from a qualitative field study that analyses the factors, challenges and determinants for positioning and marketing of TVET in Tanzania.

Keywords: *marketing, promotion, strategy, TVET*

1. INTRODUCTION

The TVET has of late received attention because of the role it plays in addressing youth unemployment (Tripney & Hombrados, 2013). TVET programmes are expected to produce functional literate adults with knowledge, skills, values and attitudes that are meaningful for tangible results in a given industrial context (Mugabi & Mueller, 2005; UNESCO, 2012). Therefore, the ideological perspective of TVET can be seen as an attempt of seeking solutions to meet the challenges of a competitive global economic environment (ILO, 2010; UNESCO, 2013). In spite of the significant role TVET plays in addressing youth employment in developing countries, challenges such as inadequate training materials, facilities and qualified tutors persist (Amedorme & Yesueneagbe, 2013). Moreover, of particular importance, there is persistent disconnect between the market demands and the skills-set possessed by many of the TVET graduates. TVET institutions are therefore grappling with the challenge of producing graduates who are competitive or relevant in the labour market (Tikly in UNESCO, 2013). These are some of the important challenges facing the TVET sub-sector in Tanzania.

In Tanzania, for instance, the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training (MoEVT, 2013) indicates that there is low supply of technicians and associate professionals such as metallurgical technicians, metal production process controllers, chemical engineering technicians and chemical process plant controllers. Further, MoEVT observes that these programmes are not adequately preparing trainees to become skilled mineral processing plant operators or chemical/glass, ceramics/rubber/plastic/textile, fur/leather products, plant/machine operators, or glass makers, cutters, grinders and finishers, or insulation workers, glaziers, riggers and cable splicer, or wood treaters. Table 1 illustrates the projected demand of human capital in the engineering and manufacturing domain.

Table 1: Projected demand of human capital in engineering and manufacturing

Broad field of study	Major Group of Occupation	2012/213 status	Short-term term target (2015/16)	Medium-term target (2017/18)	Long-term target (2024/25)
Engineering, Manufacturing & Construction	<i>Professionals</i>	14,196	17,600	24,800	144,300
	<i>Technicians</i>	26,504	70,400	124,000	146,600
	<i>Medium skilled workers</i>	374,500	440,000	755,000	3,607,500
	<i>Low skilled workers</i>	136,881	291,700	447,200	858,300

Source: MoEVT (2013)

From this data, it appears that Tanzania requires an annual growth of 14,456 for professionals, 13,344 for technicians, 3,607,500 for medium skilled workers, and 80,158 for the low skilled labour force in order to meet the 2024/25 labour-force requirements. In total, by 2025, the country will require an additional 4.2 million personnel. To underscore this need, MOEVT (2013, p. iii) asserts the following:

.... there is significant skills gap that need to be filled over the next 13 years. High skills occupations (managers, professionals, associate professionals and technicians) need to be increased by about five folds and medium skills occupations by 3 folds, on average.

1.1 The Research Problem

The TVET sub-sector in Tanzania requires new strategies to attract and retain students, especially in critical professions (UNESCO, 2013). There is also need for relevant knowledge and skills that are crucial for the job market (Ashley, Brine, Lehr, & Wilde, 2007; ILO, 2012; Murgor, 2013), and to produce graduates with new competencies (OECD, 2012; World Bank, 2007). For instance, as shown in the background section, enrolment rates, especially in professional courses are still low compared with the market demands. For example, the Vocation Education Training (VET) in Tanzania recorded only 25% growth in enrolment between 2007 and 2012. This demand for more enrolment and competent graduates is both a strength and a challenge. It is a strength because it provides the much needed employment opportunities for Tanzanian youths. It is a challenge because there is need to address the enrolment gap (see Table 1, for illustration). It is therefore important that a marketing strategy to attract and retain students is developed. However, before developing a TVET marketing strategy in any country, it is paramount to understand the determinants for positioning and promoting the TVET. This paper attempts to address this by analysing the perceptions of the TVET program amongst beneficiaries, employers and the community at large. Additionally, the paper identifies the type of information required by consumers (students, parents, teachers and employers) in order to make informed decision. Finally, the paper reviews the marketing related challenges facing TVET in Tanzania.

1.2 Limitations of the Study

A qualitative study with purposively sampled participants can have low precision power due to the limited sample numbers involved (Curtis, Murphy, & Shields, 2014). This study only sampled four TVET institutions and their surrounding communities. This challenge limits the generalizability of the findings of this current research.

2. METHODOLOGY

Tanzania is divided into 30 geopolitical regions. The study was conducted in Mwanza, Arusha and Pwani regions of Tanzania. The three regions were purposely selected across the country in an attempt for a fair representation (considering the sheer size of Tanzania in terms of accessibility and resource limitation). From the three regions, 4 TVET colleges and 4 secondary schools were conveniently sampled. The latter were included because they represent the major catchment category for students in TVET colleges. Recording their perspectives on this topic was therefore regarded as important. Data was collected through face-to-face in-depth interviews with 35 conveniently sampled key informants. The key informants were drawn from the four TVETs (administrators/or their representatives) and communities neighbouring the sampled

TVET colleges including secondary school students and teachers, parents and employers. Table 2 shows the distribution of participants by the sampled regions.

Table 2: Number of key informants interviewed per region

Category	Region			Total
	Mwanza	Arusha	Pwani	
Students (Secondary & TVET)	1	6	3	10
Teachers (Secondary)	1	2	1	4
Parents	1	2	1	4
College administrators/or representatives	2	7	3	12
Employers	1	2	2	5
Total	6	19	10	35

In total, 10 students, 4 teachers, 4 parents, 12 administrators and 5 employers were interviewed. The rationale for selecting from the 5 categories of respondents was to gain a deeper perspective from a wide array of key stakeholders as far as the topic of the research study is concerned.

A key informant guides (instrument) were developed contained specific items for each category of respondents. Data collection was done between 4th and 18th April 2016. Qualitative data from the interviews were recorded using digital recorders. After data collection, the voices were transcribed and translated into English (applicable for the interviews conducted in Kiswahili). The researchers then conducted a full contextual analysis of interviews through in-depth reading during data analysis. Being a fully immersive approach, contextual analysis enabled the researchers to reflect on the full interview so as to extract important information. Data was categorized into 5 sub-topics, namely: 1) perception of the TVET program, 2) benefits of joining TVET, and 3) relationship with the market 4) necessary information required by the consumer 5) marketing related challenges facing TVET.

3. FINDINGS

This chapter presents qualitative findings that are to be considered when developing a social marketing strategy and tools that can be used by TVET institutions in Tanzania. It examines the interrelations of marketing determinants with their implication for managing expectations of the prospective students, parents and potential employers.

3.1 Rationale for Joining TVET

As indicated in section 1.3, the enrolment rates especially in professional TVET courses is still low in view of the market demands. However, growth in this sector has been steady. MoEVT (2013) indicates that access and equity in TVET has continued to improve over the years. For instance, enrolments increased by about 350% in TET and 25% in VET between 2007/08-2011/12, with overall gender parity reaching 49% in VET and 46% in TET in 2011/12. This is a significant opportunity, indicating that the institutions are still attractive and growing. With this

in mind, the study sought to understand (from the beneficiary constituency) the rationale informing enrolment.

The reasons for enrolling in TVET were as compelling as they were varied. The main reason for joining TVET as expressed by a majority of the respondents (especially parents and students) was employability. The respondents indicated that TVET courses are more practical and provide better opportunities for employment than the ‘formal’ school system. A respondent observed the following:

The college [naming a VET] my son is attending has a very good working relationship with one of the reputable company [naming the company] here. If he does well, I am sure they will find employment for him in this company [Parent, Arusha]

Courses provided in the [VET] institutions are beneficial to youth for employment in the formal and informal sector. The service offered by skilled work force from this institution [while mentioning the name of the institution] is very much needed by our community [Parent respondent, Mwanza]

Courses offered by our institution are accredited by NACTE and as such our certificates are recognized. In addition, we work closely with various companies from where our students go for internship and eventually gain direct employment [VET Tutor, Pwani]

Other factors informing enrolment include attractive employment (“following a working relationship with the mining company, good performing graduates got employed by one of the mining companies and are well paid”, - VET Tutor, Mwanza) and readily available jobs (“demand for skilled labour is very high in the hospitality industry and our graduates are directly employed in 5 star hotels” - TET Tutor, Arusha)”

Apart from prospects for employment as an incentive to join TVET, the earning potential was also cited as a factor motivating enrolment. A respondent asserted the following:

I joined this college [mentioning the institution] because I didn’t do well in my O’ level secondary studies. However, I have never regretted after learning that Chefs in the high-end hotels are highly respected and paid even more than university graduates. Most of them have been trained from institutions like the one I am enrolled in and hence I stand a chance to earn big money [VET student, Arusha]

Opportunity and the sheer satisfaction for entrepreneurship is yet another reason for enrolling in TVET:

The courses offered help students not only to become competent in the labour market but also able to start their own businesses [VET Tutor, Pwani]

I have witnessed young people who have graduated from vocational training joining hands to open work-shops and offer good services in mechanics and

electrical installation. These are services that are highly needed and increase their income [Parent, Pwani]

From these findings, it appears that employment opportunities, earning potential, attractive employments and the thrill of entrepreneurship are key incentives for joining TVET. These reasons are not far-fetched. For instance, it has been forecasted that by 2017/18, Tanzania will have a gap of over 1.2 million low and medium skilled workers. If not addressed, the gap will grow to about 4 million by 2025 (MoEVT, 2013). This is a strategic opportunity for TVET especially when considering that Tanzania aims at becoming a middle income country by 2025 (Katebalirwe, 2014). Perhaps with this in mind, a respondent from TET (Arusha) averred the following:

we understand the growing need for competent skilled workers in mining, oil and gas and hospitality. In collaboration with Canadian TVET institution, we have developed programs that will benefit young Tanzanians hence contribute in filling the gap.

These findings provide important insight for positioning TVET to attract and retain students. The factors that attract students to join TVET include employability both in the formal and informal sectors and increased earning potential. Other factors that contribute to retention are intrinsic such as opportunities for self-confidence and satisfaction. We therefore conclude that for enhanced acceptance of the TVET courses as a first career choice, retaining available students through strengthened relevancy and collaboration with employers is necessary.

3.2 Perception of the TVET Programs

Historically, TVET has been positioned as an alternative education for those who perform poorly in academics (MoEVT, 2013). This notion has continued to reinforce poor positioning of TVET programs in Tanzania. However, this is not just specific to Tanzania. Moustafa (un-dated) argues that TVET programs in Africa face challenges of perception by parents, communities and stakeholders, and are often labelled as the ‘second choice’ and education ‘meant for those who have failed’ or are unable to compete in the ‘formal’ education system. These sentiments are supported by the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training which acknowledges that there is “poor/wrong perception on TVET and particularly on VET that is the preserve of those who are poor performing” and this eventually “affect negatively learner enrolment expansion” (MoEVT, 2013:8). Moustafa further posits that marketing strategies should seek to address this challenge as it is “vital to the development of TVET and apparently one of the major obstacles to improve the social status of TVET (Moustafa, un-dated:4), and that the challenge is to “create vocational programmes that deliver professionally successful graduates” and that when we rise to this challenge, the brightest students will be fighting for a place on TVET schemes (ibid: 4). But even with such negative perceptions echoed by some in the community (“*vocational training is for those who failed form four and underperformers who eventually become cheap and ill equipped labour-force*”, - Parent respondent, Mwanza), the study established a certain level of excitement and pride by the respondents pursuing these courses:

I did not perform well in my secondary education and that is why I had to join here. However, I do not regret my decision since I have gained practical skills in automotive technology and am certain that I will get direct

employment. Further, I have learnt that I can do some bridging courses and progress to higher diploma and degree, this made me even happier as I will have a competitive advantage as compared to my friend who went to high school [Student respondent, Arusha].

The perception of the TVET programs was not all negative. Evidence from the field suggest that students, parents and employers alike strongly perceive TVET as important in developing skills for both self-reliance and the labour market. Moreover, they found the curriculum relevant in addressing socio-economic needs facing them. For example, some of these comments were:

The course that I am pursuing is delivered in a very practical mode. It has continued to prepare me to become self-reliant. With these skills, I am going to start my own business after completing the studies [Student respondent, Pwani].

The skills gained are beyond a mere academic qualification and graduates are judged by the practical skills and not theory. This is their added advantage as in the tourism and mining sector, for example, technical knowhow is important and this is our yardstick [employer respondent, Arusha]

Apart from these, it is well understood that TVET institutions have commenced the implementation of a competence-based curriculum which promotes not only technical and vocational skills but also attitudes that are essential in the labour market. The rationale for a competence based curriculum is to meet market demands (Mbonde & Minga, 2013). Discussing this issue, a two participants posited the following:

In our college, we are taught different subjects beyond the technical ones, in addition to group work, participation in exhibition and exchange programs which all tend to strengthen not only job related skills but also work ethics [TET student, Arusha].

Because of such a responsive curriculum, “*employers are employing well rounded graduates*” [VET Tutor, Pwani].

3.3. Relationship with the Market

Collaboration with the industry is an important mechanism to understanding the market in order to tailor the programs. According to New Straits Times (2012), in the emerging economy, unfortunately, very few TVETs have stakeholder engagement plans beyond industrial attachment for their students. However, there are more areas of collaboration such as development of curriculum and learning materials (Munzwa et al., 2009), training instructors (Raihan, 2014), provision of practical training in the work-place (Obwoye, 2013), facility improvement and employment opportunities. Raihan (2014) observes that collaboration should focus on improving technical capacities, exploitation of commercialization potentials, bridging the demand and supply gap and promotion of the exchange of knowledge between the institutions and the community. From the interviews, it appears that there is a growing traction of symbiotic relationship between TVET colleges and the employment market/industry in Tanzania. This could help address the issue of mismatch (New Straits Times, 2012; Raihan, 2014) and

ultimately enhance the employability of the students (Obwoye, 2013). In underscoring this relationship, the respondents postulated the following:

The relationship we have with the colleges has been instrumental as we have benefited from tailor made short courses which is crucial for our staff
[Employer, Pwani]

Most of us have direct connection with various companies from where our students go for internship. We have had an opportunity to select good students and link them for employment [VET Tutor, Mwanza]

In the first quotation, the respondent identifies the nature of the relationship between the Company and the TVET centre i.e. exchange of skills through specific tailored courses for the staff. The respondent also indicates that the relationship has been ‘instrumental’. From the second quotation, we see the industry benefitting TVET by providing opportunities for apprenticeship. This is a clear example of a symbiotic relationship.

Additionally, the study established a certain level of awakening and proactiveness on the side of TVETs to ensure graduates possess requisite skills for the market - (as already discussed elsewhere in this paper, failure of which has resulted in the production of graduates that are not employable). A participant observed the following:

Competition in the labour market is high and we have witnessed TVET working hard to ensure that graduates have the necessary skills that we need. This is very important! [Employer, Arusha].

But even with the immense benefits arising from the collaboration between TVET and employers, it appears that the cooperation has not taken much root and is not yet well institutionalized. This is blamed on lack of “*a clear framework into which TVET institutions and employers can collaborate especially in ensuring that course contents reflect the realities at the workplace. The collaboration and dialogue, however, are at the discretion of the institution leadership*” [Employer, Arusha].

In an attempt to strengthen the collaboration between TVET and employers, a respondent poised the following:

Since we started implementation of Improving Skills Training for Employment Program (ISTEP) supported program, in collaboration with one college from Canada, we have created a forum where we meet with employers and discuss not only about the progress of our college but also get to understand what the market needs are, especially in the extractive sector. Since the initiation of this forum, we have had an opportunity to receive technocrats from one of the extractive companies who shared their experience with our students as well as securing internship positions for some of our students. This is the kind of initiative we are going to continue with and encourage other institutions to adopt this kind of collaboration
[VET Tutor, Mwanza]

3.4. Type of Information Required by Consumer

The study sought to establish the type of information required by the different consumers of TVET services and products. Establishing this type of information is crucial when one has to design an effective marketing strategy. Moreover, informed choice is largely determined by the level of awareness of the issue at hand! Munro (2007, p. 77) observes the following:

... Individuals need a range of competencies that allow them to deal with and manipulate growing amounts of increasingly diverse information, use their knowledge selectively and strategically, cope with increasingly rapid change, take greater responsibility for their own learning and direction, and think more laterally at the workplace.

Before we delve into the type of information required by TVET stakeholders, it is important to highlight the quality of information required by the consumers. Respondents pointed out that the information required should be comprehensive to offer appropriate guidance, espouse the credibility of TVET, create confidence and counteract myriad misconceptions about TVET. For instance, a VET Tutor (Mwanza) observed: *“overtime, we have realized that students and parents like to learn more about the benefits of the courses we offer in terms of how they improve the chances for employment and whether students can progress to higher education”*. This excerpt reveals three things: a) information to build a case for credibility (...*“students and parents like to learn more about the benefits of the courses”*...) b) information to build confidence in the system (...*“how they improve the chances for employment”*...) and c) information to debunk misconceptions (...*“whether students can progress to higher education”*...) We further deduce that this information should be suitable (for students, parents and teachers) for career guidance and counselling.

We provide a few more excerpts below to underscore the type and significance of the information required by consumers:

Fee structure, payment modality, campus life and opportunities for employment is important information I would like to receive [Secondary Student, Pwani]

Information related to program structure, equipment that the college has and how they (colleges) relate with employers is necessary [Secondary Student, Arusha]

I would like to hear some stories [success stories] from graduates of the college before I advise anyone to join a particular program [Secondary School Teacher, Mwanza]

Several colleges have been doing tracer studies; seldom do they share the result with us. I would like to see the results so that I am certain on how this particular college graduates are performing in the market [Employer, Arusha]

Testimonies from progressive students/ graduates have been working very well for us [TET Tutor, Arusha]

Program information and minimum admission requirements for prospective students are necessary [VET Tutor, Mwanza]

From these citations, we can classify the type of information required into 4 distinct but interrelated categories: a) information on courses (type of course, fees requirements, course admission requirements etc.) b) equipment and facilities available to enhance learning c) strategic positioning of the college relative to the job market d) information on how past beneficiaries are performing on the job market/in their trades.

3.4.1. Sources of Information

Having established the type of information required by consumers, it was important that we establish the recommended source through which such information can be accessed/ passed.

The qualitative findings indicate that traditional media (radio, TV, print) and modern media (social networks and SMS) were preferred as the sources of information. However, we established that these sources of information differ from one area to another and therefore accessibility and availability of the source determined the utilization. Further, the findings indicate that the source of information is relevant to the extent it is suitable to a particular context, it is gender and age sensitive, and it is easy to access. For instance, a respondent observed the following: *“If TVET wants to reach more people, then factors such as accessibility and availability of the particular source of information and the trustworthiness (of the source) by the users should be considered”* [Employer, Pwani].

The following excerpts provide additional clues on the sources of information:

We are providing information through TV, radio, print materials (brochures) and when we participate in exhibitions [VET Tutor, Mwanza]

TV, radio, newspaper, face-to-face presentations can facilitate marketing activities for TVET [VET Tutor, Mwanza]

Social media is the best channel which can facilitate marketing activities easier and special programs through TV and radio that explain what is happening in the TVET institutions [Employer, Arusha]

Nowadays, most of us have mobile phones. I think it will be useful if colleges used SMS to provide information to help us understand what is happening [Parent, Pwani]

Creating a dialogue structure where colleges, parents, teachers, and employers meet and discuss technical and vocational training successes and challenges is critical [TET Tutor, Arusha]

The information and the sources should consider people with special needs. A respondent postulated *“most of the institutions do not have special communication tools to reach the visually and hearing impaired persons. There is a need to develop a tool suitable for these groups”* [VET Student, Mwanza]

3.5. Marketing Related Challenges Facing TVET

The TVET sector in Tanzania follows a 10-level national qualifications framework (NQF) that ranges from craftsman qualifications (level 1 – 3) through technician, diploma, and bachelor's degree qualifications to master's degree (level 9) and doctorate levels. The wisdom behind this is to define a pathway for career development through TVET that offer equivalent academic qualifications relevant for formal and informal employment (Mchome, undated). However, even with this opportunity provided through the NQF, still many people are not aware of this path! Narrating this, a respondent observed that *“despite provision of a mechanism by the government that allows progression from certificate of competence to higher diploma and degree for students who joined VET, very few Tanzanians are aware of this path”* [TET Representative, Arusha]. With many young people longing for academic qualification, *“awareness on this national qualification framework which allows progression is important not only in ensuring that negative perceptions are addressed but also provide an opportunity to those who are academic performers to join”* [VET Tutor, Pwani].

The official policy governing the provision of education in Tanzania requires that the medium of instruction in primary school (up to grade 7) is Kiswahili language. The use of Kiswahili as the medium of instruction has both benefits to the nation (nation cohesion) and debate (Rugemalira, 2005). The continued use of Kiswahili has meant that students graduate in high school with limited grasp of the English language (Uwezo, 2011). This limitation is a handicap in view of the premium that employers are placing on employees that are fluent in English. This challenge is especially pronounced in the hospitality and tourism sector and TVET graduates are continuously required to be fluent in English to increase chances of employment. In explaining this challenge, a respondent posited- *“Graduates in the hospitality industry are generally performing well, however, English language becomes a challenge to many* [Employer respondent, Mwanza].

Another marketing related challenge identified includes poor investment in promotional activities and the lack of proper quality control mechanisms. Promotion is meant to get the brand noticed. It refers to advertisement, letting the potential customers and masses know, understand and appreciate the product/service on offer (Ehmke et.al, 2007: Kotler, 2006). For promotion to be effective, the marketing strategy should contain clear messages that are well articulated, simple and targeted to specific audiences via the appropriate channels. This requires investment. The common channels today include TV, radio, online social platforms, etc. However, TVET programs have received little ‘airtime’ in the mainstream media in Tanzania with colleges relying on simple messaging channels such as brochures and word of mouth. The following are a few excerpts from respondents that underscore promotion related challenges and gaps facing TVET in Tanzania:

The government system has not prioritized the promotion of TVET. This is evident as most of the institutions have no marketing departments dedicated at providing information to various groups [TET Tutor, Arusha]

Regular visits to rural areas and other distant schools for communicating benefits of TVET is important, however, seldom does this happen. In many institutions, this is not a priority and they tend to believe that tracer studies are enough to provide them with all the information they need [VET Tutor, Mwanza]

It could have been good if primary and secondary curriculum contained elements of vocational education themes. This would have prepared students at early stages to possibly know the benefits (of TVET) and prudently choose the path they want [Secondary School Teacher, Pwani]

I think VETA should have a person to rotate around secondary and primary schools to provide career information and advice especially for final year students [Secondary School Teacher, Mwanza]

As an indication of the magnitude of the promotion challenge, the Technical and Vocational Education and Training Development Programme (TVETDP), the blue print for the government in the medium-term (2013/2014 – 2017/2018) acknowledges the “inadequate promotion and marketability of TVET programmes” (MoEVT, 2013:10), and a “low capacity to generate and analyse labour market information” (ibid). Except for strategies to promote the enrolment of more females into TVET programs, the blue print lacks specific strategies on promoting TVET programs. This is a gap and indicates the poor attention and weight this important marketing element has received over the years. Moreover, Maige (2007) conducted a study on non-formal education as a rural development strategy for reducing rural-urban youth migration in Tanzania. The study assessed the extent to which vocational education programmes could reduce rural-urban migration of the youths. Findings revealed that publicity/awareness was not done because the youth knew little about the programmes – this led parents to not send their children to participate in vocational programmes and additionally may have caused vocational instructors to lose motivation.

To ameliorate this, Manyaga and Athumani (2010) recommend for “active marketing of courses” (p.24) and “aggressive marketing through a constantly changing market” (p. 34). Adding his voice on this, Katebalirwe (2014:14) recommended for the need to “raise the public profile and attractiveness of TVET among learners, families and all other stakeholders, including through the media, and inform them on the possibilities for progression, employment and self-fulfilment that TVET can offer”

4. CONCLUSION

These findings are instrumental in moving towards a more nuanced approach to developing a marketing strategy and tools for attracting and retaining students at the TVET institutions. While developing a social marketing strategy, it is important to debunk the notion that vocational training is for failures and underperformers. While doing so, it is important that awareness is created about the national framework that allows for progression and offers equivalent academic

qualification, for both academic performers and non-performers. This could be a motivating factor especially to those who consider academic achievement as basis for success. Developing messages that communicate this progression and tools that facilitate documentation of success stories from progressive TVET alumni is strongly recommended.

The marketing strategy should also seek to persuade Tanzanians that TVET courses are more practical and provide better opportunities for employment. While doing so, concerted efforts should be put in place to address the current mismatch between the market and skills-set produced by TVET. To underscore the centrality of the employment, MoEVT (2013:23) observes that “attaining formal employment has remained a key feature of a successful graduate”. Therefore, while designing a marketing strategy, the positioning of the benefits of joining TVET and subsequent messages should aim at communicating opportunities that are available to prospective TVET students.

The study has demonstrated that employers and parents value mutual engagement with TVET institutions and welcome a shared vision. Whereas parents’ engagement helps in building confidence, employers’ engagement helps to establish credibility of the products offered by the TVET. Strategies for reaching out to parents in a variety of ways to persuade them on the value of TVET should be explored. Moreover, strategies and tools to strengthen employers’ engagement should be considered.

Finally, the findings have shown that the main channel used to communicate with stakeholders in Tanzania has been through traditional media such as radio, TV and some form of print materials. However, while developing a new strategy, there is need to include tools that will help TVET institutions to tap into the potential of social media to engage and reach diverse stakeholders. We believe that although these recommendations are specific to Tanzania, they could be of universal utility.

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